

spruce branches close to the trunk, thirty feet up. It contained bits of egg shell, and appeared to have been broken up by some mammal.

Regulus calendula calendula. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.— Common, breeds.

Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni. OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH.— Abundant breeding bird. Nests building, just completed or with eggs were found during the entire period of both visits, and with young after the middle of June.

Hylocichla guttata pallasi. HERMIT THRUSH.— Common. Breeds. Nests with four eggs each, incubation nearly complete, were found June 18, 1915, and June 11, 1916, and a nest with three fresh eggs, June 24, 1916.

Planesticus migratorius migratorius. ROBIN.— Abundant breeding bird, nests being found everywhere, even out in fairly dense second growth woods. One nest contained young nearly ready to leave it on June 21; another held three nearly fresh eggs, June 24.

Sialia sialis sialis. BLUEBIRD.— A very few seen. A nest containing young and one addled egg was found on June 9, 1916.

MISS LAWSON'S RECOLLECTIONS OF ORNITHOLOGISTS.

BY FRANK L. BURNS.

IN a batch of papers relating to the life of Alexander Wilson loaned me by the late Frederick B. McKechnie, I found an interesting series of letters running from June 21, 1879, to February 20, 1883, signed by Malvina Lawson. The matter which appeared most valuable was copied verbatim but owing to my friend's desire to publish, it was scarcely drawn upon for my papers on Wilson. Mr. McKechnie's sad death occurred before he was able to carry out his intention and the original letters having been lost or destroyed, it seems desirable to publish my extracts. Miss Lawson was the eldest daughter of Alexander Lawson, who was born in Ravenstruthers, Scotland, December 19, 1773; came to Philadelphia in May, 1792, and died there August 22, 1846. He is described as a tall thin man of large frame and athletic; full of animation, good feeling and the love of truth, but inclined to be satirical. Miss Lawson says: "My father has been represented as

speaking broad Scotch which is simply ridiculous, I never heard him use a Scottish word except in jest or in reading his favorite Scottish poets."

He engraved plates for the 'American Ornithology' of Alexander Wilson and Charles Lucien Bonaparte; George Ord's unpublished work on mammals; the 'Monograph of the Fresh-Water Univalve Mollusca' of Prof. Samuel S. Haldeman and the 'Terrestrial and Air-Breathing Mollusks' of Dr. Amos Binney, beside various illustrations on botany, chemistry and mineralogy.

There were eight children, five of whom reached maturity: Malvina, Helen E., Catherine, Oscar A. and Mary, all inheriting the artistic talents of their parent. Malvina and Helen colored by hand most of the plates of Ord's edition of Wilson's 'Ornithology' and whatever superiority it possesses is entirely due to the skill of the girl artists. It is said that with the beautiful preparations from the Philadelphia Museum for models, they labored steadily at this work for three years and received five thousand dollars, at that time an almost unheard of sum for two young girls to earn.

Helen, perhaps the most versatile of the sisters, executed the drawings for the works on conchology by Prof. Haldeman and Dr. Binney, and also engraved the life-sized figure of the Rice Bunting used in Harrison Hall's prospectus of Wilson's 'Ornithology.' Oscar was born in Philadelphia, August 7, 1813; learned engraving under his father; was employed by the U. S. Coast Survey at Washington from 1841 to 1851, and died in Philadelphia, September 6, 1854.

The surviving sisters, Miss Malvina and Mrs. Mary L. Birkhead, removed to West Chester, Pa., in 1872, where the former died on April 6, 1884. Mr. R. P. Sharples of West Chester, to whom I am indebted for much information, was well acquainted with the sisters and recognized them as ladies of great refinement and culture. Among the family treasures was a handsome oil painting by Miss Malvina of her three sisters and a sketch book containing the work of all members of the family. Miss Lawson was born about 1806; she possessed a strong personality, a vigorous mind and was most loyal to her friends; yet it is to be feared that certain unfortunate events resulting in the loss of long cherished family treasures, somewhat embittered her later days. Mrs. Birkhead,

who was twenty years younger, survived her sister but a short time and the family is now without a living representative.

Miss Lawson writes of her father's distinguished visitors with an artist's love of detail and all the frankness of an impressionable child. How well she recalls a little act of kindness by good old William Bartram, and her description of the personal appearance of Alexander Wilson ought to set to rest the talk of his absolute poverty and especially that of his "fingers stiffened by toil and manual labor." It has been said that Wilson owed little to his engraver, but it is shown here that he sometimes made only an outline drawing leaving Lawson to fill in the details directly from the specimen; and this must be true since drawings of this nature are still in existence.

Miss Lawson's analysis of the character of George Ord can scarcely be excelled. Ord, admirable in many ways, was insanely intolerant of any opposition and was the instigator of the persecution of John J. Audubon by Waterton and others. The only pleasing feature of this attack is the refusal of "Good Charles" Bonaparte to allow his judgment to be swayed by the prejudice of his friends. But we shall let Miss Lawson tell of these things in her own way. Of Bartram she writes, "When a child I saw Mr. Bartram. He was a very charming old gentleman and he gave me a very double yellow rose, a great rarity at that time, and every summer we made more than one excursion to the garden."

"The article on the death of [Governor Meriwether] Lewis," she writes, "recalled to my mind hearing my father speak of him as being one of the most proud and sensitive of human beings. The neglect of the Government to ratify the arrangements he had made in good faith, seemed to madden him. He was rather small and dark, in strong contrast to Clark his companion. My father engraved the new Antelope they discovered, and the Horned Sheep of the Rocky Mountains. They certainly were the first animals (mammals) fit to be looked at that were ever engraved in this country." The Wilson matter follows:

"I do not feel certain whether the profile likeness (of Wilson) drawn by Barralet, was taken before or after death. My father said it did not do him justice although it gave some idea of him. Barralet had been a teacher of drawing in England and Ireland,

and you see he knew something of engraving as he copied his own work in stipple which was fashionable in that day. He certainly took a good profile, as the one he made of father proves."

"Wilson was very particular on the subject of the linen he wore, and the white cravat and ruffles were as important to him as a fine ladies' dress is to her. I am certain of all I say on this matter, not from my own memory but from the discussions I have constantly heard all my youth on the habits and manners of a man whose work has rendered him famous. My father received numberless visitors from all parts of the world, and particularly Scotland; who desired to learn everything concerning him. He might have been a little careless, but nothing eccentric; his dress was that of other gentlemen of the period. Wilson was almost a pure type of the bilious temperament, which you are aware is one best fitted for constant exertion, either mental or physical. He could bear great fatigue without flinching. His height was five feet and eleven inches. When preparing for one of his expeditions he was in the habit of taking a walk every morning, increasing the distance daily and when he could make twenty miles without much fatigue, he started on his journey."

"Some twaddle speaks of his bony hands knotted and hardened by labor, struggling to paint birds! In the first place Wilson never painted birds, he drew them in water colors, and more frequently in outline, either with pencil or pen, and my father finished them from the birds themselves. I have heard my mother speak of his hands as being small and delicate, and there was nothing in his occupation to particularly injure his hands; as I mentioned before, he wrote beautifully and played charmingly on the flute."

"I think I mentioned the drawing of Wilson's school house my sister Helen had made when quite a young girl, many years before Mr. Weaver's; it has the old trees around it and is very picturesque. Mr. Eastwick who purchased Bartram's garden, saw it and pronounced it excellent and indeed historical."

"The tomb which covers the remains of Wilson was erected by the lady he was to have married, Miss Sarah Miller, sister of the Hon. Daniel Miller, Member of Congress from the upper section of the City. The Swedes' church now occupies an obscure portion of Philadelphia, but at that time it was open to the Delaware and

nearly in the country, so that the old Lutheran pastor could see his apple orchard from his pulpit. Many years ago, a gentleman much interested in Wilson, was anxious to have his remains transferred to Laurel Hill Cemetery, a beautiful and picturesque place on the banks of the Schuylkill; he consulted my father who saw no objection but on applying to Mr. Ord, who was the sole surviving executor, he positively refused to permit the removal."

"Rider, the artist who undertook the coloring of Wilson's first edition, was a Swiss painter in oils; he understood water colors however, but to facilitate his work, spoiled a great many copies by using opaque colors both in Wilson's and afterwards in Bonaparte's works. Of course none of this trouble was felt in the same way by Bonaparte, although he complains bitterly of Rider."

George Ord, Wilson's biographer and editor of the latter volumes of his work *Miss Lawson* knew personally. Of him she writes:

"Mr. Ord was a very singular person, very excitable, almost of pure nervous temperament. Proud, shy and reserved toward strangers; but expansive and brilliant with his friends; an elegant belles-lettres scholar and when he chose, shone in conversation. In his moral character and his business relations he was one of the most upright of men. He had many excellent qualities, was a strong partizan and was charming in conversation when it pleased him to be so. He had much of the nervous grace of a woman when he spoke on literary or sentimental subjects. I remember my father laughing heartily when I was about nine years old; I said I thought Mr. Ord conversed like a woman, and being asked why I thought so, I said: because he could show off all his knowledge to the best advantage. He particularly detested children and the fear of intruding on him accompanied me all his life. He would get in a temper of rage at times. Father, who valued his good qualities, never very steadily opposed him; but my mother had many arguments with him. I have seen him snatch up his hat and rush out of the house, declaring he would never enter again, and the next Sunday he would walk in to tea as usual as if nothing had happened. He took tea at our house every Sunday for years. He was very much respected but not very much loved. He would often speak very rudely to gentlemen, and more than once father was consulted as to whether Mr. Ord should receive a challenge for what he said, but father was always a peacemaker."

“Toward the close of his life he did some queer things. He must have destroyed the likeness of himself that his son painted and also the plates that my father engraved for his proposed work on animals (quadrupeds); nothing of the kind was found among his effects and not a line of the descriptions I know he had written. He dropped this work on a reverse of fortune; having lost heavily in railroads. Had the work been continued it would have been an honor to the country. There are only two works that would have approached it: Scotts' Dogs and Churchs' Horses. There were only four plates engraved. Mr. Ord allowed the Academy of Natural Sciences to print a limited number of copies from the plates of the Rat and Ground Hog, I think about 100 impressions. I have only one copy of the frontispiece, a group of the smaller Quadrupeds, Weasel &c. drawn by Le Sueur, a French artist, and very prettily engraved. I wish I could send you entirely finished copies, but the Ground Hog is the only one that is so. The Elk and the Florida Rat are not finished, as you will observe on the impressions of the Rat that my father has written 'unfinished.' In the Ord letter edited by Dr. Coues, he mentions presenting impressions to Leach of the British Museum. Mr. Ord often expressed a determination that no one should profit by these engravings and no one has done so. To his other oddities he added the last whim of leaving all he died possessed of, about \$40,000. to the Penn. Hospital for the Insane, although he had nephews and nieces in very limited circumstances. Toward the close of his life he shut himself out entirely from the world, living with his books. He had lost most of his old friends and made no new ones.”

“Charles Bonaparte,” writes Miss Lawson, “married one of his cousins (Zenaide) a daughter of Joseph, ex-king of Spain. She accompanied her husband several times to our house. Her sister Charlette, Joseph's youngest daughter, was quite an artist. While she lived with her father at Bordentown, she took several views on the Delaware. Mr. Ord accompanied her on some of these occasions and said that he had never seen such a rapid pencil. She afterward engraved all the drawings she took here, on stone, and Charles Bonaparte gave father impressions of her work. She married a cousin, I think a son of Jerome, who also was an

artist and etched very spiritedly on copper. Charles sent this with some of his sister-in-law's drawings from Florence."

"I do not know whether you ever saw any uncolored impressions of Bonaparte's work? Every one said it was a pity they should ever be colored. The Condor in particular is wonderful and so are some of the Geese."

"I do not know the commencement of the strife, but the advent of the Prince of Munsigno set the whole Academy [at Philadelphia] by the ears. He appeared to make warm friends and equally warm enemies. He would come to father and tell him in high glee of the last *war-whoop* and its effect, laughing heartily. For a time he seemed to take a sort of boyish delight in setting them all by the ears, but he grew tired of the fuss and I think it was one reason of his return to Europe."

"I only caught a glimpse of Mr. Waterton when he called on father; he was the darkest white man I ever saw. He left a bird set up in the style he had invented, for father to examine. It was the most perfect thing I ever saw, not a feather was ruffled. It was hollow and the shape of the bird carefully preserved. Father did not think it would last long and I believe this was the case."

"I have no doubt Mr. Ord does not spare Audubon, I have heard him expatiate too frequently on that subject not to be fully aware of his bitter scorn and contempt. I saw Audubon when Bonaparte brought him to see father. He looked like the backwoodsmen that visit the city. His hair hung on his shoulders and his neck was open."

"Ord wrote Lawson from Paris, dated Mar. 14, 1830: 'You make some pretty tart remarks upon the work of that imposture Audubon, who has endeavored to keep the public curiosity alive for a long time. Your criticisms are just and men of intelligence will be obliged to acknowledge them. If one of your uncommon experience be not a complete judge of these matters; then in the name of common sense who is judge? You tell me that a certain Professor of Botany declared that the drawings of the plants are excellent. Now I have the pleasure of conversing when in London with two botanists quite as well known as Soloman C., one was the illustrious Robert Brown, they both asserted that the Botany of Audubon's plates was good for nothing. What is the fellow doing in America? He surely cannot be in want of matter, for

what he carried to Europe would suffice for a long time. Did he expect to procure subscribers? If so he surely made a mistake. I hope I. C. will prevail with the Library com. to subscribe for a copy; otherwise I fear that when one wants to examine the Elephant with a view of studying its character, one will not know where to find it.'

"Another letter written by Ord about 1838, from the home of Waterton, Walton Hall, Wakefield, Eng.: 'By the way, some of Waterton's essays would amuse you vastly; he gives some terrible thrusts at Audubon. Lizars of Edinburgh, Audubon's first engraver, was here a few days ago; if I had room I would tell you what he said of the great ornithologist whose reputation is sadly on the wane.'

"Here is an extract from a letter of Charles Lucien Bonaparte in reply to one from Lawson: 'Rome, July 2, 1836. As to Audubon, although his work is not faultless; be sure you under rate him a little too much. There is some merit in some of his plates, that of the Goldfinch appears to me very superior. I am sorry to hear that he had such a bad reception in the U. S. I have got him several subscribers. I cannot take your wicked commission to Temminck for I have scolded him severely for not subscribing to the work at my recommendations. Some of Audubon's plates are superior to Temminck's, who vilifies them. As to Audubon's new species, I shall never rely on that; slight variations do not make new species.'

"The only acquaintance I had with Nuttall," writes Miss Lawson, "was when I colored his plates in his continuation of Michaux's work on the trees of America. You know the drawing and coloring of the original Michaux were exquisite. Nuttall had his coloring made up from other works, especially from Michaux. Nuttall himself was the least attractive of the Genus Homo I ever met. I could never imagine any Englishman so dirty and disorderly in his dress and appearance. I suppose he was a good botanist. I have heard young men who studied with him, speak of him with great respect as a teacher, but I thought his manners rough and abrupt."

In a five page reference to Dr. Coues' criticism of some of her father's work, Miss Lawson writes: "Never again will such engraving be seen! The day of fine work of that kind is over; and except one or two English works on natural history, nothing has approached it."